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AUTHOR Sharpe, F. G.
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ABSTRACT

Issues in the impact of educational research on educational policy and practice in Australian schools are addressed in this paper, which provides an overview of the numerous research and evaluation projects being conducted in Australian education. Specific questions examined are the extent to which: (1) the research subjects (schools) benefit from the research; and (2) decision makers in other parts of the system are informed and act upon research findings. In the paper, the director-general of the Department of School Education describes the importance of school-university collaboration and asserts that any high-level decision contemplated by the director-general must consider relevant information of various kinds from multiple sources. It is recommended that the department adopt a set of formal structures to oversee the role of research in departmental activities and to provide for ongoing data collection, storage, and analysis. A conclusion is that the department's own research program is more likely to be directly beneficial because it is applicable to departmental needs and decision-making purposes. Such decision-oriented research is distinguished from basic, or conclusion-oriented, research. Appendices list Australian research and development projects and funding amounts for 1989, research and evaluation projects for 1991, Department of School Education steps for commissioning research, and characteristics of useful decision-oriented research. Six figures and one table are included. (LMI)

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"The Impact of Educational Research on Educational Policy and Practice Within a School Centred Context"

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Paper by Prof FG Sharpe
University of NSW

delivered to the
NSW Institute of Educational Research
at Macquarie University
14th August, 1992

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The careful wording of the topic given to me by your committee seems to me to be based upon certain assumptions.

The first is that educational research does indeed have an impact on education policy and practice. That is not a surprising assumption for an organisation whose whole raison d'etre is educational research, and many of whose members are, at least partly, dependant for their livelihood on such research. It may not be so obvious to the casual observer of the decision-making processes in Education Ministries and Departments however; it may not be so obvious in the educational policy committees of the various political parties; and it might not be obvious to the fly on the wall at the Australian Education Council (AEC). Nevertheless I can confirm from my long years in educational decision-making at school, state and national level, that research does indeed make a discernible impact from time to time at all of those levels. The degree of impact depends on many factors including the level of commitment of the particular decision-makers to the research process, their level of awareness of the findings of applicable research, the degree to which the particular decisions are political as opposed to educational, the time available to gather information to inform the decision, the usefulness of the research base and so on. Moreover the impact can often be indirect, mediated through the contributions of a number of almost anonymous Departmental Officers whose views and advice have been molded by their own readings and academic study.

The second assumption seems to be that the impact of research "within a school-centred context" will in some way or another be different from a context which is not "school-centred" however such a context might be described. I imagine the "school-centred context" mentioned here is one in which significant authority has been devolved to the local school for the allocation and use of its physical and human resources, including its finances. In such contexts, these rights are sometimes afforded to the school in return for less autonomy in other areas such as curriculum development. And at times the increased politicisation of the policy and even the management processes can indirectly limit the degrees of discretion which genuinely lie at the school level. My

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predecessors Doug Swan and Bob Wilder have raised some provocative issues along those lines in a recent book by Harman et al on Restructuring Education in Australia. Those comments aside, the topic seems to require of me to contemplate what kinds of shifts may have occurred in the impact of research as the system became, in those terms, more school centred.

I came across this orange document in the heap of odd materials that find their way into our University of New South Wales staff common room. It is titled "Conducting Research in the Metropolitan South West Region" April 1992 - a publication of the Research and Evaluation Committee of that Region. It states that the goal of the Committee is "the approval, co-ordination, improvement and promotion of research in Metropolitan South West Schools." The goal of the booklet itself is to "assist in the development and encouragement of meaningful research projects within the Region's schools, projects that will have a positive impact on learning opportunities for students" - the ultimate impact on policy and practice.

Now the very fact that such a committee exists in a region rather than or as well as at the Centre suggests significant progress towards school-centredness. But the fascinating thing about the document to me is not the approval processes it establishes, but rather the huge number of research projects conducted in Metropolitan South West schools in the past three and a half years. 148 pieces of research are listed, 20 of which are still in progress at this time. They range across the whole spectrum of possibilities from large-scale longitudinal, professionally contracted projects such as ACER's Youth in Transition Study, to action research projects by individual teachers in particular schools (eg Picture Books in the Upper Primary); from evaluations of the implementation of Government policies (eg Basic Skills Testing) to esoteric academic explorations (eg Programmed Multi-Sensory Stimulation of Sensorially Deprived Students); from curriculum evaluation (eg Investigation of 2 Unit HSC PD/PE/Health Syllabus) to the analysis of the Whole School Review in a number of schools.

If this is typical of each of the 10 regions, (and I think it is) one would be forgiven for believing that a prima facie case had already been established for a profound impact of research on policy and practice within the regions at least.

There is a similar bright picture for research commissioned from the central level of the Department. An examination, for example, of the 1989 Annual Report shows that 15 separate pieces of external research and evaluation were contracted out by the Department in that year at a total cost of $658,760. Funding for individual research projects ranged from $11,250 to $160,000. All of it went to Universities except for one project with

the ACER. Nine Universities were involved in one or more pieces of research. (see attachment 1) At that time I have no doubt that the NSW Department of Education was one of the largest funding agents of educational research and evaluation in Australia. It may still be.

In addition to those external projects, the Department's own small Research Group was engaged in four substantial research or evaluative exercises.

In the last Annual Report, relating to 1991, there were two internal projects and 19 external projects, either completed or in progress. A change had been made to the method of recording costs, with the total cost for the full life of the project being given in place of the annual cost. The total cost of projects recorded on that basis is $1.198m with project costs ranging from $3,500 to $574,000 - a substantial commitment indeed. (Attachment 2)

Of course in terms of "impact" another series of questions need to be asked.

They include:

> To what extent are the particular schools which are actually the subjects of the research enabled to benefit directly from the experience, both during the research activity and when the report is finally presented?
>
> To what extent are the findings of the research made available to schools, read by teachers and acted upon by teachers and schools?
>
> and To what extent do decision-makers in the other parts of the system (including the Director-General) become aware of and act upon the findings of such research?

I will try to answer at least some of those questions from my own experience.

But first, a couple of asides.

As Director-General I always had more than one motive in fostering research links with Universities. I had been concerned for many years with the gulf that seemed to have developed in this and other states between Departments of Education and the faculties of Education and Teacher Education. The Department seemed largely locked out of any real influence on or involvement in the pre-service education of teachers, tertiary institutions were largely kept at arms length in relation to the induction and ongoing professional development of teachers, and the two organisations were going much their own ways on matters of research and evaluation. I wanted to foster a growing attitude of inter-dependence between

the two groups which would, I thought, bring benefit to the quality and relevance of pre-service teacher education, more continuity to the career development of teachers, and intellectual stimulation for all concerned. I think that has happened and is continuing.

Moreover I had a very strong desire to foster the proper use of research and evaluation findings in decision-making at all levels, but particularly on matters of policy.

I have noted elsewhere that the functions and powers of the Chief Executive Officer in Government Departments, including Departments of Education, in relation to policy development and high level decision-making, have been changing rapidly in recent years, with Ministers and Governments taking a much more prominent role, not only in matters of high general policy but also many matters of operational policy and even management. Nevertheless the Director-General, and his/her senior executive team still have a major role in preparing high level policy advice to Governments and in determining many operational policies for the system as a whole. And, in theory at least, the Director-General remains pre-eminent in relation to top level management decisions.

The sheer complexity of the environment in which policy is developed and policy decisions taken would be self-evident to you all. No man is an island and the Director-General of Education is certainly not one. An examination of the policy environment demonstrates the wide range of organisations and persons whose views must be taken into account in any high level decision - from those of the Government itself, other Government Departments, Ministerial advisers, interest groups of various kinds, other educational organisations both within the State and at a National level, as well as the members at the various levels within the organisation itself, particularly the teachers in schools. (Attachment 3)

It is clear then that any high level decision contemplated by the Director-General and his senior executive group, whether it be in the form of advice to the Minister, or executive action by the Director-General, will need to take into account relevant information of various kinds and from various sources. Among these will be political party platforms, stated Government policy, the personal views of the Minister and his/her advisers, the overall mission and strategic goals of the Department, advice from various policy experts within the Department, information from the Department's substantial data-base, an understanding of the views of all key interest groups, a knowledge of the situation in other States and Countries, and some understanding of public opinion derived from polling or the media. In addition the personal values and views of the key decision-makers will also come into play. (Attachment 4)

Data and information derived from internal and external research and evaluation will inevitably have to compete with all of these other sources of information if it is to play a significant part in the final decision taken.

For this to be effective, the Department needs a set of formal structures to ensure that research plays a proper role in all of the Department's endeavours and particularly in decision-making itself. This can't be left to chance or it simply won't occur. For this reason we built into the formal structures of the organisation, units with a clear responsibility to advise on future research/evaluation topics, to manage the internal and external research program, to examine research and evaluation reports and to advise senior management on their decision-making implications. There is also the need for an ongoing data collecting, storing and analysing service to serve as a fundamental information base for all of the Department's decisions and actions. In the structure of the Department when I left it in November 1991 these responsibilities lay with a Directorate of Management Information Services and a Directorate of Policy, Planning and Educational Audit, reporting to two senior officers with a seat on the Department's highest planning and policy development bodies. A particular function of these Directorates was to ensure that the findings of research, and particularly the findings of the Department's own costly internal and commissioned research activities, were placed before the policy makers at the critical time and were properly considered by them in the process. Parallel structures existed at regional level. (Attachments 5 and 6)

Ensuring the most effective use of research is easiest, and is more likely to be directly beneficial, with the Department's own program of research itself. - Such research has been commissioned because of recognised Departmental concern or need, and resources have been consciously applied to gathering information to assist in decisions which the Department knows it will be contemplating. This kind of research is therefore directly applicable to the Department's perceived needs and the information is specifically geared to be on the table at the point of decision making. Following Cronbach and Suppes, I label this kind of research as Decision-Oriented Research. Because it is linked so closely to the specific needs of the client, and the time when the information is required is so rigid, this kind of research has significantly different characteristics from those of Conclusion-Oriented (or if you like, more Basic) Research. My own reading and thinking on these matters has led to a number of comparisons between Conclusion and Decision-Oriented Research. (Attachment 7)

You may beg to differ

Area of Comparison	Conclusion-Oriented Research (Basic Research?)	Decision-Oriented Research (Applied Research?) (Evaluation?) (Action Research?)
Motivation	Curiosity	Problem-solving
Objective	Conclusions	Better Decisions
Laws V Descriptions	General laws/theories	Descriptions of particulars
Instigator	Researcher	Client
Degree of Freedom	Autonomy	Client contract
Variability	Follows leads	Not variable
purpose	Scientific truth	Social worth
Goal	Increase in knowledge	Practical application
Generalisability	Generalisable	Not generalisable
Value orientation	No value judgement	Value judgement
Investigative techniques	Control Z Variables	Controls not so strong
Quality criteria	Internal and external validity	Credibility
Discipline base	Single discipline	Multi-disciplined
Audience	Other academics	Practitioners

Now the Department implemented very careful processes to ensure that its decisions benefited from the findings of its own program of decision-oriented research. Research priorities were determined each year by the Director-General on the advice of the Policy Committee as the result of a widespread canvassing of the views of hundreds of people in all levels of the system. After tapping the opinions of the major interest groups and in consultation with the Minister and his/her advisers. When decisions were made on priorities, the Department set out on a series of structured steps to get the research done and to ensure that its findings made a difference. These are set out in Attachments 8 and 9.

The most difficult steps in this process relate to negotiations with the researchers over the shape of the final report. Research reports are never neutral (just as information is never neutral) but they can at times represent political or industrial dynamite, and a great deal of understanding, flexibility and political nous is required by all concerned, including the researchers, for this stage to be negotiated successfully. Although I can remember a number of touchy situations which were good learning experiences for all of us, I cannot think of one occasion on which the report did not emerge in a way which retained the professional integrity and personal morality of the researchers while conforming to the political and management realities of the time.

When the Report finally reached the Senior Executive with further advice from Departmental Officers, I can assure you that every recommendation was considered in detail and some action was taken on each one. Remembering that decisions are made on far wider base than research information alone, not all recommendations were of course implemented - some were rejected outright - but many were enacted exactly as proposed by the researchers. I can remember now the changes we made for example to the staffing of Central Schools as a result of research by Mitchell College, the modifications we made to the HSC assessment system arising from the research of a combined Sydney/Macquarie University group, modifications to our integration policy arising from the findings of the Macquarie study on changes to the Work Education Program as a result of research by Wollongong University to name but a few of many. On the curriculum front the new Primary Maths and Sciences Syllabuses, to cite but two, are infinitely more appropriate and effective as a result of the detailed and highly structured evaluation carried out before-hand.

There is, of course, some other research which is decision-oriented but is not carried out in the context of a specific contractual arrangement between a commissioning agent and the researcher. I am speaking of research carried out independently by the researcher,

not just to further the body of knowledge in a particular field, but with the direct but general intention of influencing educational decision-making. We all know that some research of this kind emerges into public consciousness at critical times just when particular matter have an high profile. Chubb and Moe's research on the effectiveness of the self-managing school is one that comes to mind in recent times. Earlier I can remember Rutters' work on Good Schools in Britain which stemmed the tide of declining resources and public faith in schooling generated earlier by Jencks and Coleman. To be most effective, researchers keen to have this kind of influence need to heed the following considerations. (Attachment 10)

<u>Research specifically carried out with an intention of influencing educational decision-making</u>.

* Requires up-to-date knowledge of key decision issues eg "Directions in Education".
* Requires understanding of likely future trends and issues.
* Research findings must be made available to decision-makers in a form they can use.
* Personal contact between researcher and decision-makers can be useful.
* Publication in more popular Education journals - eg PDK or Educational Leadership - can be useful.

In any case, my own experience of working with both kinds of decision-oriented research suggests that it is most likely to be useful if it conforms closely with the following characteristics. (Attachments 11 and 12)

* **Timely** - Findings available prior to point of decision

Commissioned Study	Self generated Study -

* **Sound Research Design**
  - Stands up to detailed scrutiny.
  - Makes only reasonable claims.
* **Provides Policy Options and Expected Outcomes**
  - not necessarily recommendations.
* **Written in Plain Language**
* **Summarized for Rapid Digestion**
* **Practical - Oriented to Real World**
* **Takes into Account Feasibility and Resource Issues**
* **Readily Available to Decision-Makers**
* **Politically Astute**
  - takes into account political realities
* **Answers the Questions the Decision-Maker Wants Answers To.**
* **Is Modest - Makes no Unwarranted Claims.**
* **Adheres to requirements of Confidentiality**
  - public report may be accompanied by private report.
* **Research/Evaluation carried out within parameters of contract costs and delivered on time.**

* **Willingness to work effectively with a reference group or supervisory team.**
* **Acceptance that nothing might come of the study**
  - may be shelved or shredded

The impact of Conclusion-oriented research is less direct and overt. It is evidenced pre-eminently in the area of curriculum development and it is generally mediated through the influence of a small number of highly knowledgeable, highly committed and enthusiastic curriculum officers in a particular learning area, in conjunction with a core of academics in the same field drawn from one or more tertiary centres. They tend to promote their understandings of the research findings in their field with a missionary zeál. Piagets' stages of development were injected into the consciousness of primary schools in this way, as were the concepts of child-centredness and process learning. Problem solving approaches to Mathematics and concept-based syllabuses in Health Education have also been justified on the basis of research. The rationales of the Department's long-standing and enduring policies on Multicultural Education, Aboriginal Education and Gender Equity were all strongly research-based, along with its policies and practices in the various aspects of Special Education. In all of these areas the Department has substantially contributed to scholarship as well as benefiting from it.

In many ways the curriculum area constitutes both the crowning glory of the linkages between research and practice in the Department and also its lowest ebb (to badly mix a metaphor). Sometimes missionary zeal can border on unthinking fanaticism, and reasoned commitment can give way to one-eyed conformity to a prejudiced and unbalanced view. Research which supports that view is described as "the best modern research" while an equally impressive array of research which calls the view into question can either be ignored or dismissed as inadequate or unthinking.

It is at times like these that the most inappropriate uses of research become evident in the Department and elsewhere. Research is said to "prove" or "disprove" one thing or another which is generally beyond the capacity of any research. Selective use may be made of research studies, or the findings within one study. Conclusions about one population or set of circumstances may be improperly generalised to another. Resort is made to such general and high-sounding phrases as "recent research shows", or the "most reputable research in this area demonstrates x or y" without any specific research being cited. These approaches generally lead to two opposing camps being set up with equally committed but contrary views, both basing their strongly held positions on the "findings of the best modern research". My personal experience of such unedifying circumstances has led me to cringe a little when curriculum developers tell me there is only one best way of teaching a particular

subject regardless of the characteristics of the student body and other situational factors. I remember being told the same thing in the days of the Cuisinaire Rod and set theory. Where are they today?

Not that these aberrations apply only to the curriculum area. I have seen research selectively used on both sides of the class size debate, on composite classes and basic skills testing, to name a few. I have seen policies relentlessly pursued when all of the research evidence suggests them to be misguided and unlikely to be successful. Some of my expert colleagues at the UNSW fear this is happening now in relation to the so-called generic transferable employment-related competencies. And we have all no doubt suspected that some research reports never see the light of day because of the awkwardness of their findings.

Having noted all these things, I still believe strongly that on balance the impact of research on the education system is generally positive and beneficial. And this can be particularly so in a system where the decisions about the ultimate allocation of resources are made at the school level. A school-centred system is a context well suited to school based action research.

I take action research to be the process of collecting data about a problem, a need or an objective of the organisation; feeding the data back into the system to the people most affected; taking action to alter selected variables to take account fo the new data, and evaluating the results of these new actions by gathering more data. The process of data-gathering, feedback, action and evaluation is a continuing iterative one, as members of the organisation come to rely increasingly on systematic data about their own actions as an appropriate basis for planned new actions. Action research is actually a systematic model of organisational learning and planned change. People in the organisation learn how to be more effective be reflecting systematically on what it is their organisation is intended to achieve, how it is currently performing, and what it should change.

That kind of action research process has for a long time been well understood and practised in the best schools. At other times it may have been called Organisation Development or the School Development Cycle. But in the past there was often the tendency to wait for and depend upon the intervention of an external consultant or carry out the process in fits and starts motivated by inspections or full school appraisals. Moreover, with the major power of discretion in the allocation of resources to priority programs and activities lying outside of the school, the large-scale effectiveness of changes made in response to the findings of such action research was somewhat limited.

In the days of the Spinks and Caldwell model of the Collaborative School Management Cycle (see Attachments 13 and 14) and Dr Brian Scott's School Renewal Plans, such limitations no longer exist at the school level. Financial resources can readily be shifted to support new priorities and programs and many schools are voluntarily partaking of the power which can be released from being able to determine the specific nature of their staffing needs and selecting the right of applicants to fulfil the required tasks. Suddenly school-based action research makes a great deal more sense and generates a great deal more commitment from teachers, principals and the local community. The deep involvement of School Councils and the School Renewal planning cycle adds a new dimension to the process in many schools.

In this school-centred model of school education, action research has a profound part to play in ongoing school renewal and improvement through its direct impact on the way in which schools are organised, their curriculum and program priorities, the teaching-learning process, and the quality of the interpersonal relationships within them. In helping the organisation to grow, action research also has a positive effect on the growth and development of each individual staff member. It is a powerful tool for professional development.

I understand that all schools in NSW are now engaged in these processes. No doubt some are more effective than others. But no school can embark, however tentatively, on this process of conscious self-exploration, without being changed for the better by the process itself.

Research will no doubt continue to impact on high level policy and management decisions at the Centre and in Regions in the ways I have recounted. People like you here tonight to a certain extent hold the key to the quality and relevance of that impact. But in a system where the prime resource decisions are located at the school-level, where schools are encouraged to serve the needs of their immediate clients and be different from one another, where school improvement is based on the conscious application of a national schools renewal planning cycle, the deepest impact of research will come from action research carried out by the teachers, parent and students in the context of their own school.

Perhaps the NSW Institute of Educational Research could carve out a role for itself, alone, or in conjunction with one or more tertiary institutions, in promoting the concept of action research at the local school level, and offering top-line inservice programs to enhance the quality and effectiveness of such research.

I leave that for your consideration.

Appendix 5

Research and Development 1989

Commissioned Research

Project	Research Institute	Cost ($)
[illegible]y of Secondary Schools in NSW (longitudinal study)	Australian Council for Educational Research	145,000
The Beginning Principal	University of New England	40,000
Organisation of Secondary Schools	University of New England	11,250
Selective High Schools	Macquarie/Sydney/Technology Universities	33,000
Evaluation of St Marys High School	University of NSW	34,600
Impact of Basic Skills Testing	Macquarie University	25,350
Integration of Disabled Students into Regular Classrooms	Macquarie University	160,000
Work Education Programs in NSW Schools	Wollongong University	35,000
Curriculum Participation and Retention —Education in the Senior Years in Metropolitan South West Region	University of Western Sydney	20,000
Central Schools Research (Phase 2)	Charles Sturt University	28,270
[illegible]acher Satisfaction and Retention in Rural Areas	Charles Sturt University	28,810
Contemporary English Syllabus	Charles Sturt University	20,000
Fair Discipline Code	Hunter College of Advanced Education	29,720
Gender Differences in Self Concept	University of Western Sydney	29,940
Standardisation of NALTALLCK Identification Measures	Macquarie University/National Acoustics Laboratory	17,820
		$658,700

Other Research

Project	Researcher
Leading Teachers Evaluation	Dr N. Roseth, Research Unit
SBS Evaluation	Mr A. Craig, Research Unit
Incentives for Teachers to Teach in Remote Areas of the State	Dr N. Roseth, Research Unit
NSW Index for the Disadvantaged Schools Program	Mr A. Goodyer, Research Unit, in conjunction with MISD staff

APPENDIX 6

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION 1991

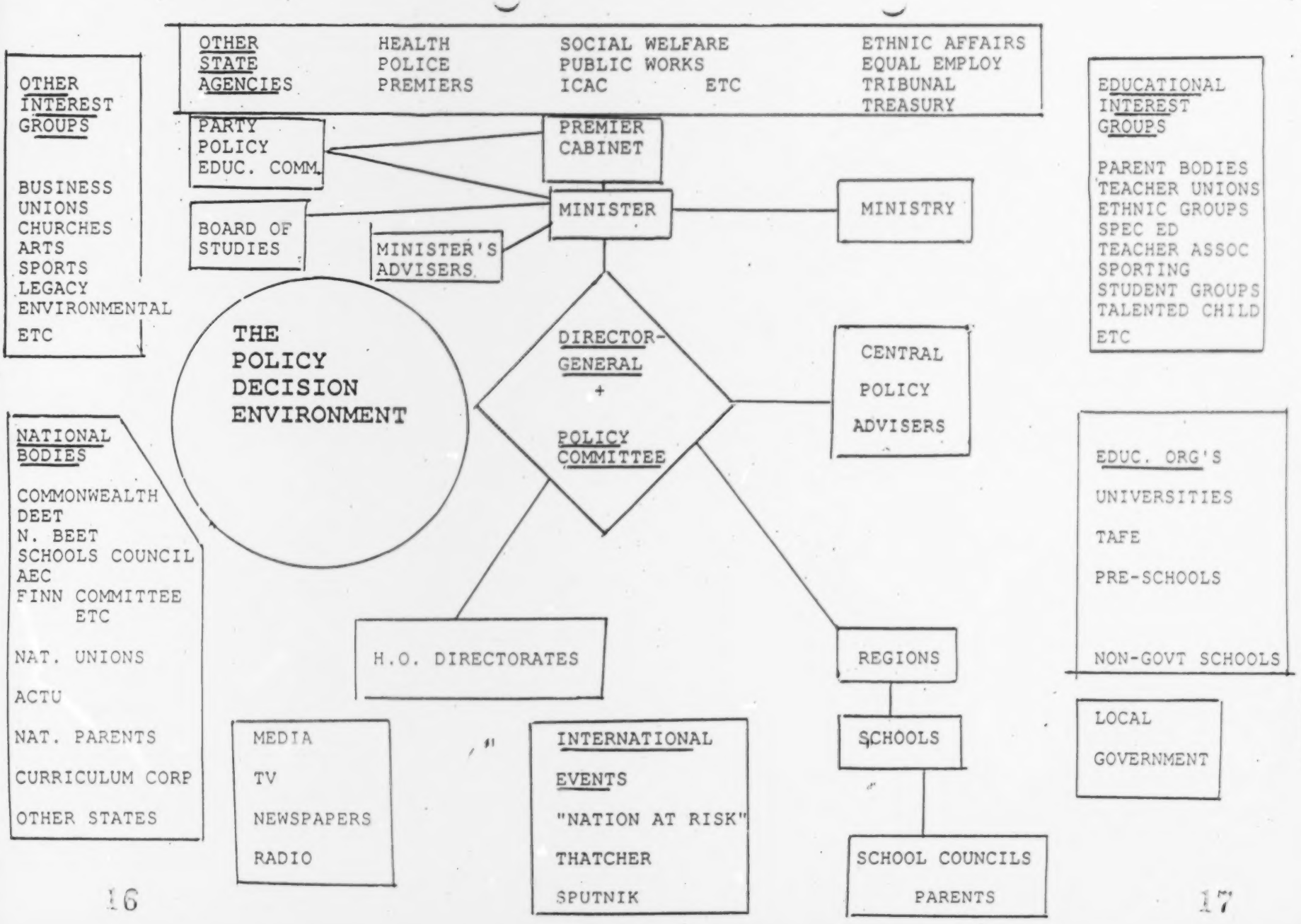
Internal Projects

Project	*Status*
Flexible School Resource Management Trial	Completed
Leading Teachers, Phase 2	In Progress

External Projects

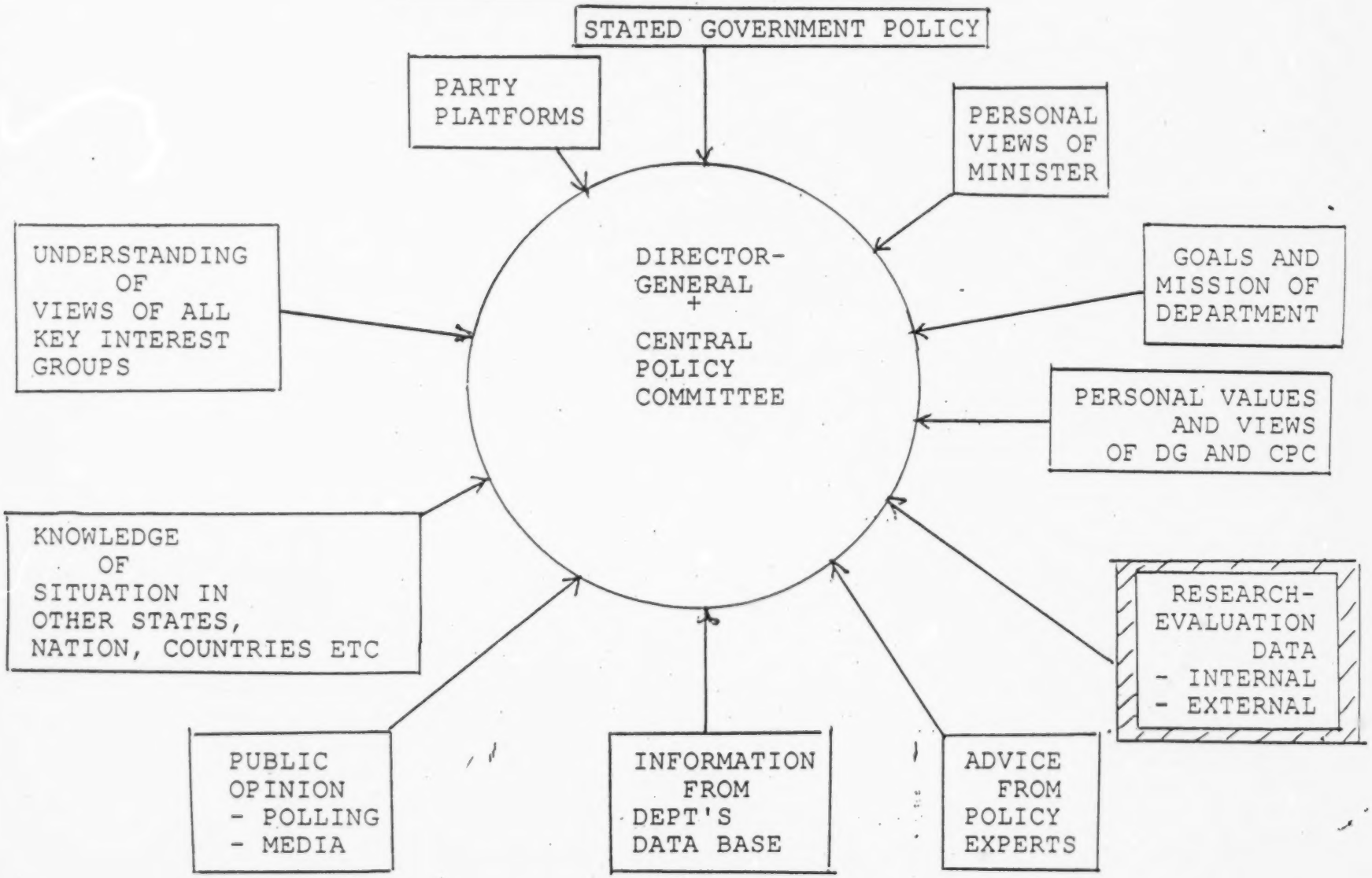
Project	*Status*	*Cost ($)**
Beginning Principal	Completed	40,000
Central Schools Research, Phase 2	Completed	28,270
Organisation of Secondary Schools	Completed	13,254
Selective and Agricultural High Schools Entrance Tests	Completed	3,580
Selective High Schools, Phase 1	Completed	115,499
Senior Secondary Schooling in New South Wales	Completed	573,926
Teacher Satisfaction and Retention in Rural Areas	Completed	28,813
Comprehensive High Schools— School/Community Interface	In Progress	39,778
Contemporary English, Years 11-12	In Progress	20,000
Cromehurst (LD) Evaluation— Controlled Research Study in the Area of Learning Difficulties in New South Wales	In Progress	53,787
Implementation of Aboriginal Education Policy in NSW Government Schools	In Progress	93,792
Pilot Access (Telematics) Evaluation	In Progress	45,332
Reading Recovery	In Progress	55,531
School-Based Budgeting and Performance Budgeting	In Progress	5,401
Special Education Plan— Program 19: Learning Difficulties Policy	In Progress	50,000
Special Education Plan— Program 19: Special Education Support Centres	In Progress	30,000
Special Education Plan— Program 19: Support Classes for Students with Mild Intellectual Disability in Secondary Schools	In Progress	31,813
Special Education Plan— Program 19: Early Intervention	In Progress	35,000
St Marys Senior High School	In Progress	34,600
		$1,198,373

* The cost shown is the total amount allocated over the life of the project.



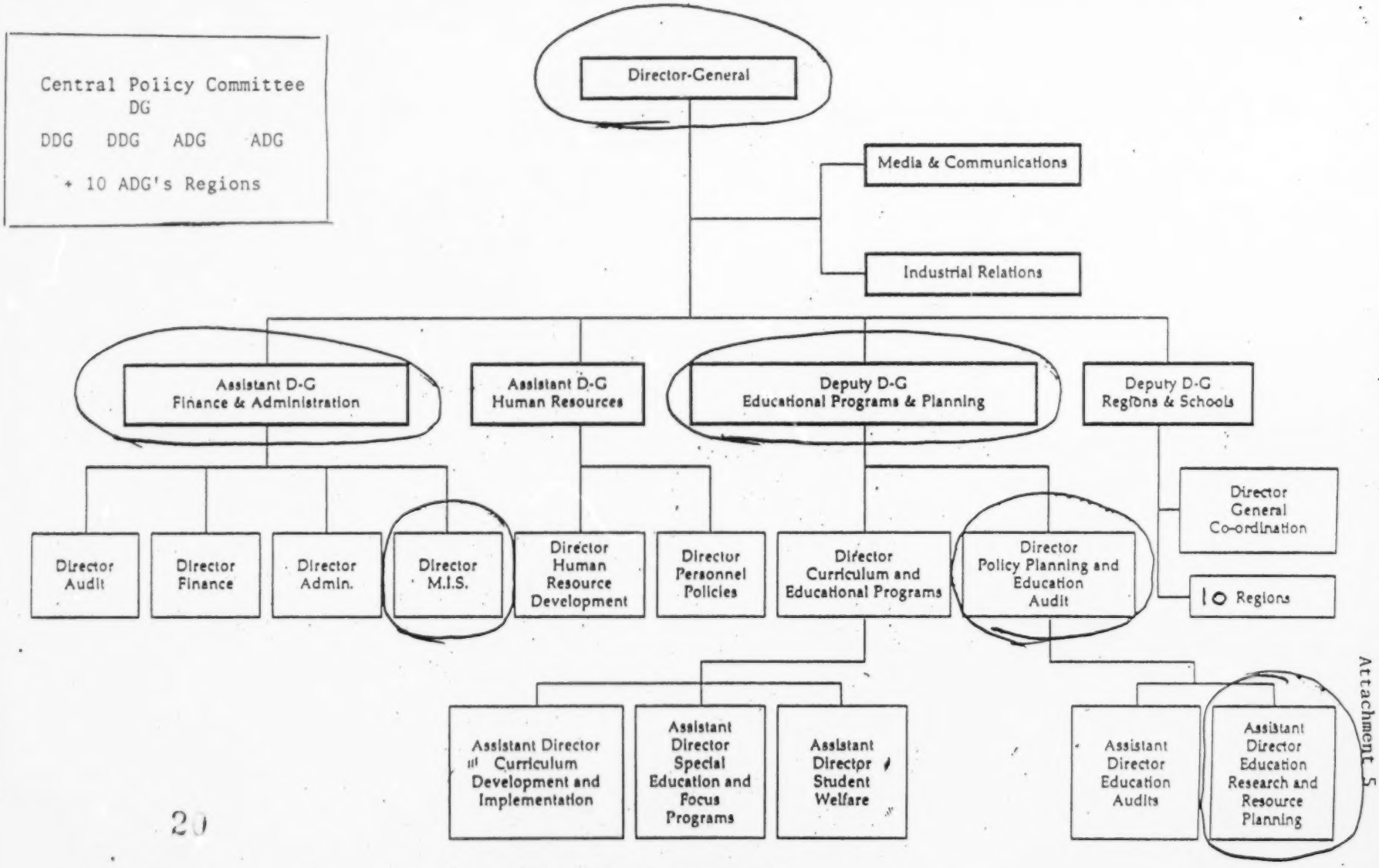
Attachment 3

INFORMATION BASE FOR POLICY DECISIONS


STATED GOVERNMENT POLICY
PARTY PLATFORMS
PERSONAL VIEWS OF MINISTER
UNDERSTANDING OF VIEWS OF ALL KEY INTEREST GROUPS
DIRECTOR-GENERAL + CENTRAL POLICY COMMITTEE
GOALS AND MISSION OF DEPARTMENT
PERSONAL VALUES AND VIEWS OF DG AND CPC
KNOWLEDGE OF SITUATION IN OTHER STATES, NATION, COUNTRIES ETC
RESEARCH-EVALUATION DATA
- INTERNAL
- EXTERNAL
PUBLIC OPINION
- POLLING
- MEDIA
INFORMATION FROM DEPT'S DATA BASE
ADVICE FROM POLICY EXPERTS

Attachment 4

Chart 1
Department of School Education
Proposed Central Executive Structure



Attachment 5

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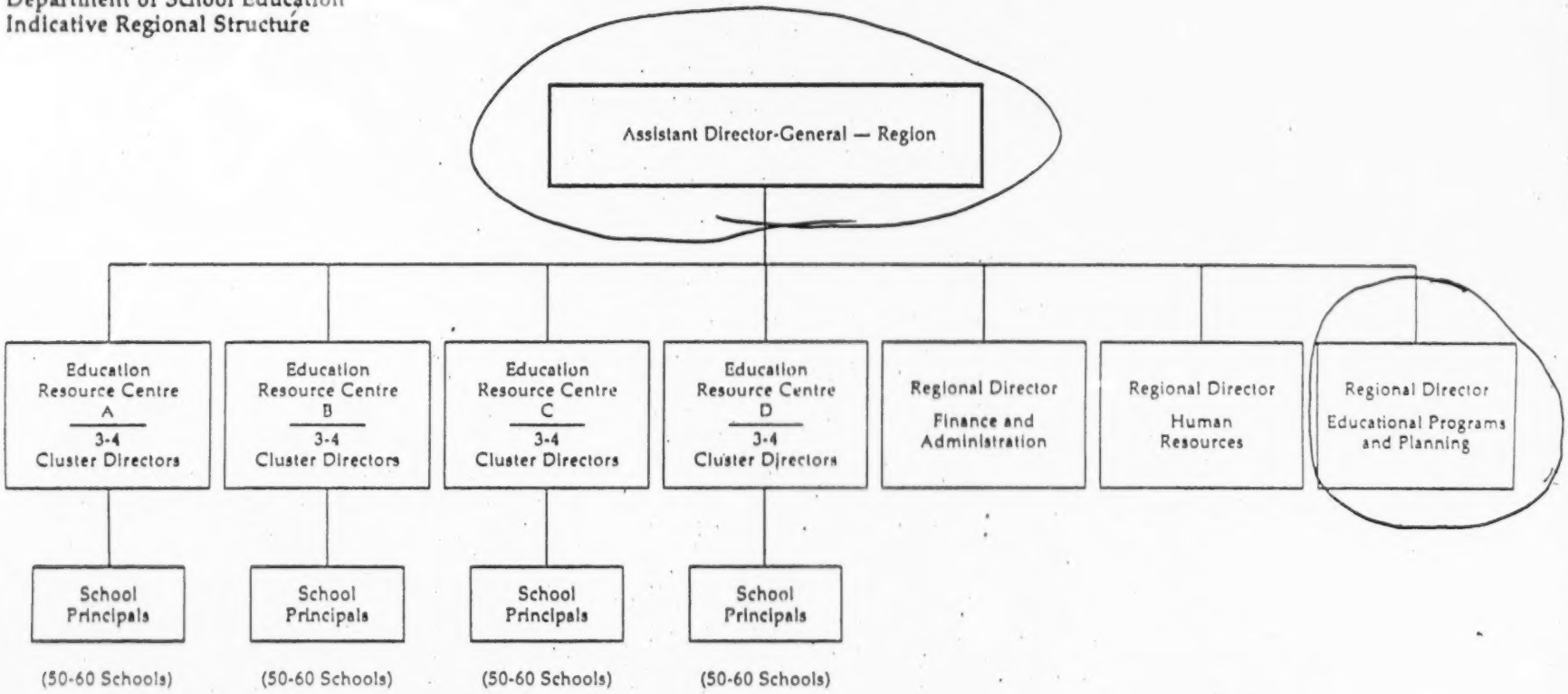
Chart 2
Department of School Education
Indicative Regional Structure



Attachment 6

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Area of Comparison	Conclusion-Oriented Research (Basic Research?)	Decision-Oriented Research (Applied Research?) (Evaluation?) (Action Research?)
Motivation	Curiosity	Problem-solving
Objective	Conclusions	Better Decisions
Laws V Descriptions	General laws/theories	Descriptions of particulars
Instigator	Researcher	Client
Degree of Freedom	Autonomy	Client contract
Variability	Follows leads	Not variable
purpose	Scientific truth	Social worth
Goal	Increase in knowledge	Practical application
Generalisability	Generalisable	Not generalisable
Value orientation	No value judgement	Value judgement
Investigative techniques	Control Z Variables	Controls not so strong
Quality criteria	Internal and external validity	Credibility
Discipline base	Single discipline	Multi-disciplined
Audience	Other academics	Practitioners

DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION
STEPS IN DEALING WITH COMMISSIONED RESEARCH

1. Advise universities of general research priorities in coming year. (Research group in Department).
2. Seek general expressions of interest.
3. Determine specific research topics.
4. Either: - (a) offer to known organisation
   - (b) go to public tender
     - advertise
     - provide detailed brief to enquiries
     - receive proposals
     - evaluate proposals
     - select research team
     - negotiate contract
5. Establish research reference group which generally supervises research.
6. Advise schools of support for research.
7. Meet to discuss progress from time to time.
8. Receive draft report

9. Negotiate changes to report.
   - possibility of a confidential sub-report.
10. Negotiate how final report will be dealt with:
   - formal presentation to senior executive and perhaps Minister
   - press release - Minister?
     - D.G.?
     - Researchers?
   - availability of researchers to media?
11. Considered by appropriate Directorate
   - prepare formal recommendations to Senior Executive.
12. Considered by Senior Executive

    Recommendations - approved
     - amended
     - rejected
     - shelved for time being
     - sent for further work
13. Approval or amended recommendation sent to operational units for implementation.
14. Report on implementation in Annual Reports.

NON-CONTRACTUAL DECISION-ORIENTED RESEARCH

* Research specifically carried out with an intention of influencing educational decision-making.
* Requires up-to-date knowledge of key decision issues e.g. "Directions in Education".
* Requires understanding of likely future trends and issues.
* Research findings must be made available to decision-makers in a form they can use.
* personal contact between researcher and decision-makers can be useful.
* Mass media need to be utilised to full extent.
* Publication in more popular Education journals - e.g. P.D.K. or Educational Leadership - can be useful.

CHARACTERISTICS OF USEFUL DECISION-ORIENTED RESEARCH

* **Timely** - Findings available prior to point of decision

Commissioned Study	Self generated Study

* **Sound Research Design**
  - Stands up to detailed scrutiny.
  - Makes only reasonable claims.
* **Provides Policy Options and Expected Outcomes**
  - not necessarily recommendations.
* **Written in Plain Language**
* **Summarized for Rapid Digestion**
* **Practical - Oriented to Real World**
* **Takes into Account Feasibility and Resource Issues**
* **Readily Available to Decision-Makers**

* **Politically Astute**

  - takes into account political realities.

* **Answers the Questions the Decision-Maker Wants Answers To.**

* **Is Modest - Makes no Unwarranted Claims.**

* **Adheres to requirements of Confidentiality**

  - public report may be accompanied by private report.

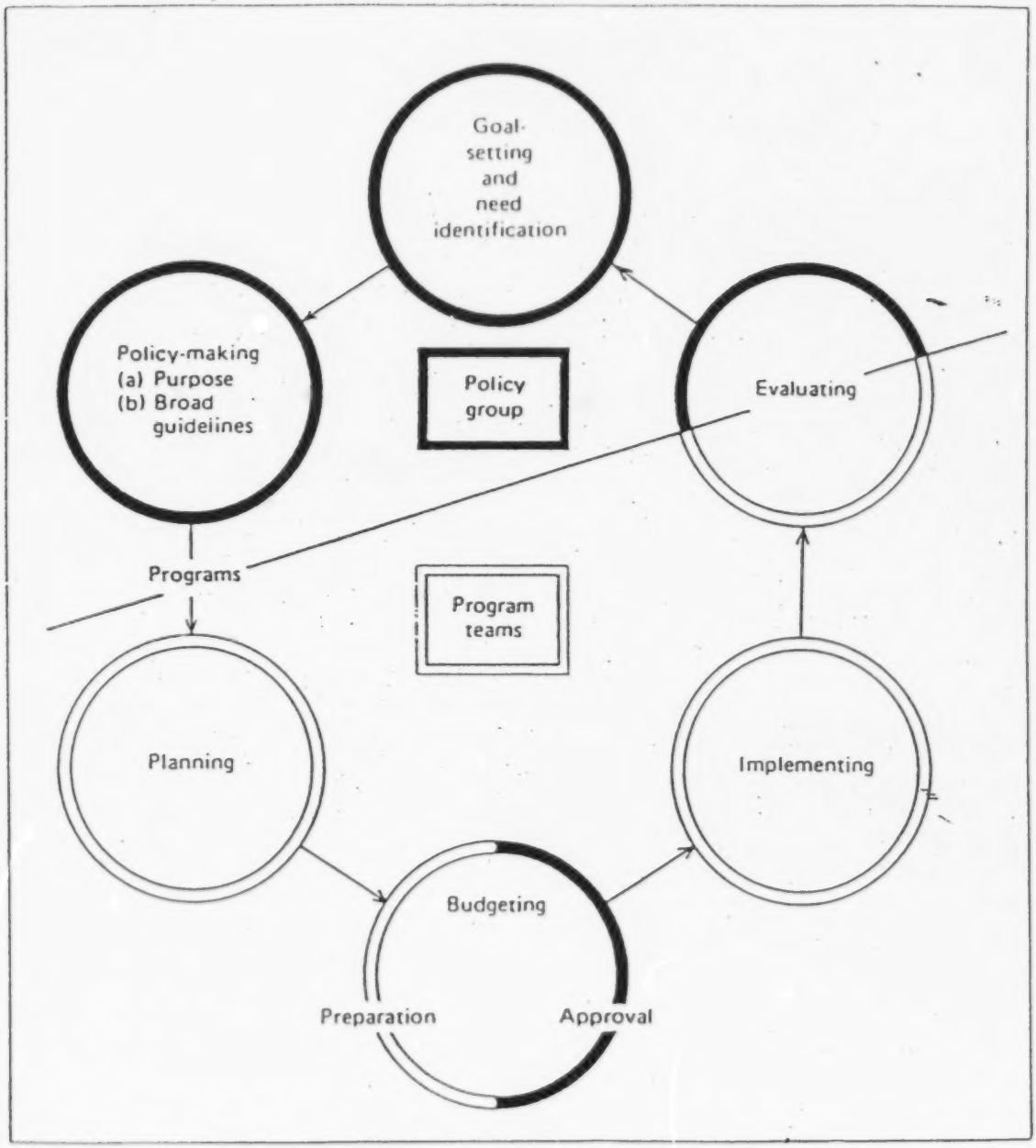
* **Research/Evaluation carried out within parameters of contract costs and delivered on time.**

* **Willingness to work effectively with a reference group or supervisory team.**

* **Acceptance that nothing might come of the study**

  - may be shelved or shredded

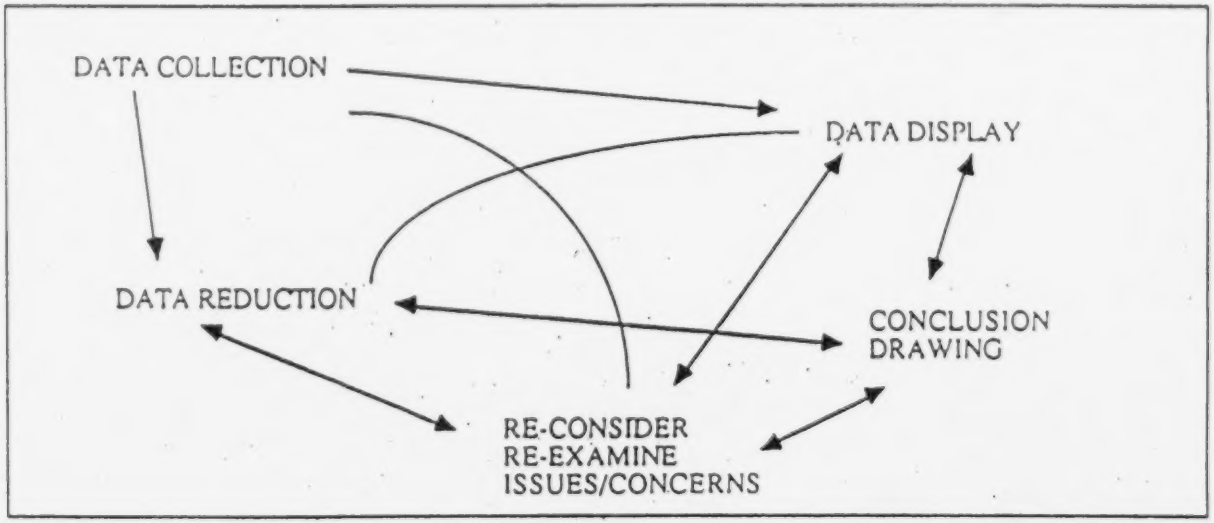
OHT 2: COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT CYCLE



Caldwell & Spinks 1988 "The Self-Managing School"

Attachment 14

COLLECT AND ANALYSE INFORMATION - A CONTINUOUS CYCLICAL PROCESS



O.H.T. 1.